Agenda
For Change

A DISTRICT LEVEL ROADMAP
FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS
TO SUSTAINABLE WASH SERVICES

NOVEMBER 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DRAFT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CapEx   Capital Expenditure
CapManEx   Capital Maintenance Expenditure
CoC   Cost of Capital
ExpDS   Expenditure on Direct Support
ExpIDS   Expenditure on Indirect Support
GPS   Global Positioning System
JSR   Joint Sector Review
MoU   Memorandum of Understanding
NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation
O&M   Operation and minor maintenance
OpEx   Operation and minor maintenance Expenditure
SDGs   Sustainable Development Goals
SWA   Sanitation & Water for All
UN   United Nations
WASH   Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

GLOSSARY

District   District is used in this document to refer to the principal local government area where WASH services are planned and delivered. The name varies between countries (district, commune, county, municipality, prefecture) but describes in each case the administrative service area for WASH.

District-Wide Approach   The approach ensures a comprehensive plan for assessing need, planning and delivering WASH services and monitoring performance in such a way that no communities or people are excluded. It is an approach to ensure universal and sustained access to water, sanitation and good hygiene. It demands clear lines of responsibility, effective partnerships, sustainable financing arrangements and mechanisms for accountability.

Agenda for Change   A global movement, through a collection of like-minded organisations, working to take a sustainable, systems building approach to achieving universal and sustained WASH access, through global advocacy, development of tools and demonstration of approaches to stimulate sector change.

Service Delivery Models Refers to the combination of management approaches at service delivery level (e.g. community, private, public etc.) and the necessary vertical legal, policy, institutional, regulatory and financing frameworks which support these management structures and allows them to function effectively.

Service Authority   Refers to the institution(s) with the legal mandate to ensure that WASH services are planned and delivered. Service authorities are usually, but not always, equated with local government, and not necessarily involved in direct service delivery themselves (although they may in some cases). Note – as WASH covers multiple sectors (water, health, education...) this role may be played by multiple district-level organisations.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO AGENDA FOR CHANGE

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set targets for WASH that require a fundamental shift in approach to achieve the global commitment for universal and equitable access. New services need to be brought online to reach every last person, and services and service levels need to be sustained, affordable and equitable for all. To achieve this, significant changes are needed to the way the sector works and how development partners and organisations support governments to achieve their goals. A shift is needed from piecemeal project-based initiatives, to a comprehensive long-term approach which supports permanent service delivery and strengthens local systems. Fragmented initiatives need to be harmonised under unified, government-led plans and the building blocks for sustainable service delivery put into place at all levels. Strengthening central government systems will help to ensure a robust national framework. Efforts need to be redoubled to enable subnational (e.g. district and municipal) authorities to fulfil their decentralised mandates regarding planning, financing, managing and supporting service delivery.

Agenda for Change is a collaborative response to the shortfalls of existing approaches and was launched in 2015 by a collection of like-minded organisations[1] with a common vision and commitment to universality and sustainability. Agenda for Change is a movement guided by a set of shared principles and a shared way of working. The aim is to contribute to achieving universal access to sustained services, by applying a systems approach to WASH. This means supporting the sector in countries from district to national levels, testing and demonstrating approaches, and learning at national and global levels from district experiences, to scale up successful approaches.

Most countries have decentralised services and require local government to take on the WASH service authority mandate[2]. Local authority bodies are responsible for ensuring that everyone in their area has access to sustainable services. This service authority role is distinct from that of service providers, who are responsible for the day to day delivery, operation, maintenance and administration. Agenda for Change therefore takes the district level as its entry point, with the goal of achieving universal and sustained access across the district. The imperative is to support service authorities to develop evidence-based plans to achieving and sustaining universal access across the district and to implement these district-wide plans with the support of aligned partners, monitoring and learning together and being held accountable.

Although Agenda for Change takes the district as its entry point it recognises that successful district initiatives can only take place within a robust national enabling environment and well-functioning sector. Those implementing Agenda for Change processes therefore work with governments to resolve any weaknesses within the sector enabling environment and to ensure that country systems are applied in the districts.

In this way district level approaches are developed within an overall national framework, with successes brought to the national level to replicate best practice.

Implementing the principles mentioned by Agenda for Change at district level provides practical examples to other parts of the country on how to systematically plan for and achieve the SDGs for WASH.

We take a holistic and systems-wide approach to strengthening the building blocks at all levels to ensure permanent services for all; we refer to this as the district-wide approach.

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1 Including Aguaconsult, IRC, Osprey Foundation, WaterAid and Water for People, with increasing engagement from other organisations.

2 The term "service authority" is used for the institution(s) with the mandate to ensure WASH service delivery and carry out functions such as planning, budgeting, oversight, monitoring and support for WASH services at the local level. In most countries, the service authority is normally equated with decentralized local government (referred to variously as municipalities, district authorities or communes) and devolved line ministry posts (such as ministries of water, health, education); but this responsibility can also rest with higher levels of government such as regions or provinces, or even states in the case of federated countries. In this document we use the term 'district' to denote the service authority, understanding that the service authority function may lie with multiple entities, as WASH is a multi-sectoral issue.

1.2 AIM OF THE DOCUMENT

This document aims to provide an overview of how the principles and practice of Agenda for Change can be applied at district level, following a generic (e.g. non-country specific) roadmap. The document aims to:

1. Elaborate on the principles of Agenda for Change, at different institutional levels;
2. Provide an overview of the main steps of the roadmap at district level and its linkages with wider sector strengthening activities; and
3. Provide links to associated tools and resources.

While this document mainly relates to efforts to strengthen district level WASH systems, Agenda for Change partners recognise that system strengthening is also required at national level to create an enabling environment for service sustainability. We will continue to work to situate this roadmap within a broader national framework.

1.3 SCOPE AND AUDIENCE OF THE ROADMAP

This roadmap presents a framework of elements for WASH systems-building at district level. It is not prescriptive: the sequencing of activities and even whole steps need to be adjusted to the context of a specific country or district, recognising that countries and sectors move at different speeds and are in various stages of development. Systems strengthening processes are rarely linear and do not follow pre-defined steps: it is often the case that the process starts halfway along a roadmap and retraces some steps, in order to move forward again. We recognise that embarking on the district-wide approach in practice is more like a winding road than a straight route. The roadmap we present has emerged from trial and error in several countries and is distilled from the collective experience of the supporting organisations. In each country where the roadmap (or parts of it) has been applied, the route has taken a slightly different form, and has also required modifications for different districts within each country. Few districts have followed it exactly as presented here. The roadmap will remain work in progress, a 'living document', updated periodically as further experience is gained in the growing number of countries in which Agenda for Change is applied.

For more information on Agenda for Change, visit https://www.washagendaforchange.net

The scope of application to date has been in rural areas, and with more emphasis on water than sanitation[3]. It focuses primarily on district functions related to provision and oversight of public services, with less emphasis on private sector provision or self-supply[4]. Applying this roadmap to urban contexts, and areas served by utilities, would require further changes and modifications. Turning this generic roadmap into a specific tool for a particular context is not straightforward and requires experienced facilitators. This document is primarily aimed at professional staff of Agenda for Change members who are well versed in sector context and processes, governments involved in the district-wide approach, and other organisations engaged in facilitating WASH systems change and interested in applying these principles.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE ROADMAP

This remainder of this report is structured into four chapters: chapter two outlines the key principles of Agenda for Change when applied at the global, national and district levels. Chapter three provides a step-wise guide on implementing the roadmap at district level. Chapter 4 outlines the linkage between the district-focused activities and country systems strengthening. Chapter five draws some brief conclusions.

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3 Sanitation and hygiene aspects are captured where possible in this document. This is an area for further work in coming years.
4 The assessment phase and district plan will cover these approaches but may not fully capture household level investments.

2. AGENDA FOR CHANGE PRINCIPLES

Agenda for Change is guided by a set of principles that apply at district, national and global level[5].

2.1 OVERARCHING GLOBAL PRINCIPLES

- We, as sector stakeholders, are committed to achieving the goal of universal access to WASH by 2030. Our mission is driven by evidence of the fundamental role of WASH in all development outcomes and in the broader poverty-eradication agenda. This target date is non-negotiable if we are to deliver on the internationally agreed SDGs.
- Access to sustainable WASH services is a fundamental human right, as recognised by the United Nations.
- To achieve universal access to sustainable WASH services by 2030 all agencies must focus and harmonise their efforts on building effective WASH systems, changing practice from simply delivering hardware focused projects.
- We are convinced the sector can achieve lasting universal access by 2030 but understand that this will require new partnerships, better use of existing finances coupled with new funding sources, and a serious commitment to monitoring for improvement.
- Governments are the responsible bodies with the mandate to lead efforts; external agencies must support and build government capacity to lead and succeed. We commit ourselves to work collectively and adhere to behaviours that strengthen country capacities to deliver permanent and accountable access to WASH services (see Figure 1).
- No robust country plan aiming to achieve universal access by 2030 should fail because of a lack of finance. Finance must address all stages of the service delivery cycle and must be achieved more creatively and effectively. Financing must come from individuals, communities, and district and national governments, combined with and supported by traditional aid and/or philanthropy and vehicles such as loans, social impact investments, and bonds.
- Achieving universal and permanent access to WASH services requires improvement in integration and alliances with other sectors, including health, education, finance and the environment.

- We commit ourselves to building and supporting country-led institutions, processes and networks aiming to achieve universal access by 2030, and will find creative ways to support country participation and leadership in broader sector initiatives like the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership.

2.2 AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Figure 1: SWA Collaborative Behaviours

- Achieving universal access to WASH services that last requires government leadership and political commitment.
- Strong institutions that are accountable, responsive and well-coordinated are necessary to deliver and sustain responsive services that reach all communities. All partners will work together to strengthen key sector building blocks[6].
- We commit ourselves to investing and participating in a cyclical process of planning, monitoring, assessment and corrective action.
- Including everyone means tackling inequalities by targeting resources at the most marginalized and excluded people, ensuring that they can assert their rights to WASH services and meeting this with responsive and accountable services.

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5 Detailed information on the principles is given at https://www.washagendaforchange.net/about
6 It is important to note that there is no globally agreed list of sector building blocks. These are the ones defined when the Agenda for Change principles were established: sector policy/strategy, sector coordination, sector finance, institutional arrangements, performance monitoring. Agenda for Change as a movement is currently in the process of defining them in more detail.

- National policy-making and monitoring systems should support implementation processes at district level and be informed by experiences at this level, to reduce significant gaps between policy and practice.

2.3 AT DISTRICT LEVEL

- Success means every household and public institution (e.g. schools and clinics) has access to water and sanitation services that last. Although hard to achieve, this is measurable and is the cornerstone of our efforts, with a focus on nobody being left behind.
- Success at district and city levels requires new alliances and working relationships between local government, local communities and the local private sector, with governments taking the lead. External agencies should work with all these players to ensure success. We commit ourselves to doing this in our work.
- The outcome we seek is that water flows and sanitation and hygiene services are guaranteed for all, permanently. Different management arrangements can be constructed to achieve this: public, private, community or in combination.
- Achievement of district- or city-wide access requires planning, including comprehensive investment plans. We will support district- and city-level agencies to coordinate the development and delivery of these plans. External agents must respect the primacy of local government in leading district and city-level planning.
- District- and city-based models of universal service provision should ultimately inform national and global policy, programming, finance, systems and practice priorities. We commit to investing in documentation and learning from work at the local level, and to disseminating this to higher levels through learning mechanisms.
- All WASH agencies should aim to strengthen local and national monitoring systems, and, to use these systems for their own monitoring when they are available and sufficiently robust.
- Community empowerment and engagement is a fundamental part of ensuring that the rights of all to WASH services are realised. We commit ourselves to supporting this approach and to supporting governments and service providers to establish and strongly support mechanisms through which they can be held to account.

3. ROADMAP FOR UNIVERSAL AND SUSTAINABLE SERVICES AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

3.1 CONCEPTUALISING THE ROADMAP

Agenda for Change presents the roadmap as a guide to the application of the principles described above through a sequential process of systems building. The road map starts from the premise that in order to achieve universal access to WASH services, all the main building blocks that make up a strong WASH system need to be in place. Although the road map is not prescriptive, there is a logical sequence to the building blocks, as some can only remain strong if others are in place, at least to some extent. However, unlike physical bricks, our building blocks are not inert objects, but living processes. Putting these building blocks in place is not a one-off activity that is 'done', but a progressive and iterative process of supporting and evolving aspects of the sector.
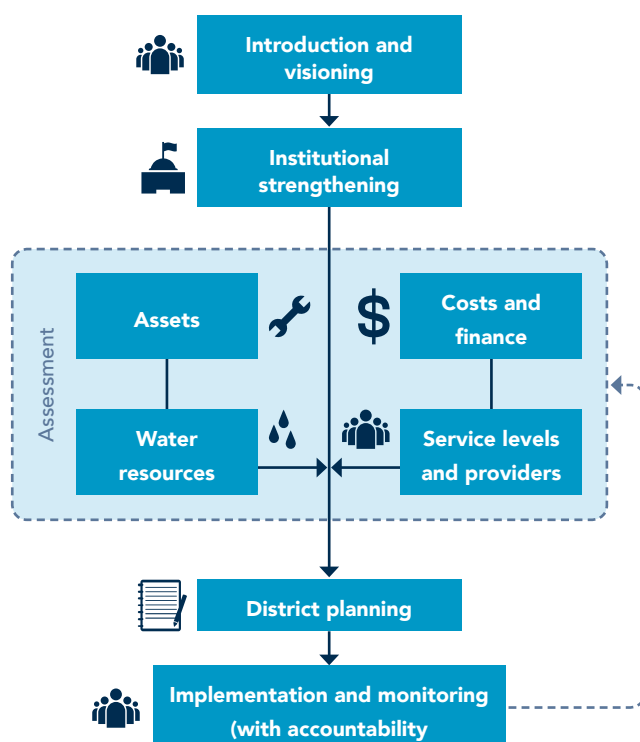

Figure 2: An Overview of the Roadmap Process

The systems building process follows the usual steps of a programme cycle of visioning, assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring. This process lays the foundation for the system and establishes building blocks, at least at a minimal level. Over time, these building blocks are progressively strengthened and expanded as the process is repeated. As shown in figure 2, the roadmap consists of the following steps:

1. **Introducing** the concept of strengthening WASH systems and the district-wide approach, capturing the **vision** of stakeholders, and consensus building on how to achieve sustainable universal access.
2. A capacity assessment of relevant **institutions** (of the service authority, planning bodies, and e.g. monitoring authorities) is followed by institutional strengthening activities, to ensure a solid foundation for government-led progress.
3. An **assessment** of the current status of WASH services is undertaken across the district, identifying service levels, existing and required infrastructure, financial needs and gaps, and other information required to understand opportunities and obstacles.
4. Assessment provides a robust evidence base for **planning**, and a baseline for subsequent monitoring. In this step, assessment data is analysed and validated, and a district WASH plan and financing strategy is produced to chart the way to universal and sustained WASH access.
5. The **implementation** phase involves a harmonised, collaborative effort (governmental, NGOs, private sector), with technical assistance where necessary, and regular reviews, learning and mechanisms for **monitoring and accountability.**

A series of tools support particular steps in this process. Some are generic, whilst others were developed in specific countries where Agenda for Change partners have been working. A wide range of tools is available in the sector as well as those mentioned in this document. Effective tools already in use in a country WASH sector should be used whenever appropriate, especially to ensure that monitoring data collected at district level feeds into national monitoring systems. It is more important to follow the principles and steps in the roadmap than to be driven by the use of a particular tool set.

3.2 INTRODUCTION AND VISIONING

Objective
- To introduce and build understanding and commitment to the principles and concepts of systems strengthening and achieving universal and sustainable access to WASH services within a district.
- To develop a common vision on WASH services for the district, and develop a contextualised roadmap on how to get there.

Outputs
An initial roadmap for reaching universal and sustainable WASH services at district level (at least up to the planning phase), championed by the district authority, and with commitment from the relevant, district and national, stakeholders.

Method and tools
A combination of meetings and workshops. Examples of visioning tools can be found in the EMPOWERS guideline https://www.ircwash.org/resources/empowers-approach-water-governance-guidelines-methods-and-tools

Contextualising the Roadmap

As every WASH sector and district is unique, a clear understanding of the sector context is needed to tailor introduction of the roadmap and proposed steps. This requires an understanding of sector policy, strategy and targets, institutional mandates at national and district level, other systems building initiatives and existing government planning processes. While some basic knowledge may exist within organisations supporting the district-wide approach, it is worth checking that everyone is on the same page, and that the minimum conditions for proceeding with the process are in place. There may be studies undertaken as preparation for this process, including for example, a sector political economy analysis. Government engagement in the roadmap is critical, as is the commitment by district authorities in embarking on a journey of system strengthening, and developing and implementing a roadmap for universal WASH. Not all districts will be willing/ready to engage.

Developing Stakeholder Understanding of the Roadmap

Systems strengthening approaches are relatively new in many contexts, and success relies on the consensus and commitment of stakeholders. Introducing and explaining the concept and principles of Agenda for Change and their application at district level is a critical step in getting stakeholders interested and aligned. Workshops at district and possibly regional or national level are required.

Visioning and Consensus Building

Visioning helps stakeholders to think beyond the day-to-day problem solving and define a shared and desired future state of the district with respect to WASH. In some instances, a visioning exercise starts with building district-level awareness of national WASH targets and commitments, and how they need to be translated down to the local level. This is important, as district stakeholders are not always aware of global or national commitments. Consensus building can include using whatever data is available on functionality and access to carry out a 'reality check' on the current status of WASH. A brainstorming process will promote stakeholder dialogue to identify the destination the district needs to get to[7]. Exchange visits to districts or countries where the district-wide approach has been successfully applied can raise interest and commitment. Stakeholders (including politicians) are often easily convinced of the need to 'reach everyone'; the concept of 'forever' also needs to be strongly emphasised in reaching agreement and commitment. Achieving a consensus that sustainability is even more challenging than expanding services is a significant moment in district commitment.

Agreeing an Action Plan

Stakeholders develop an initial action plan for the early steps of the roadmap, particularly focusing on institutional strengthening, assessment, and planning. This process needs facilitation under the leadership of the district authority. The plan will include a timeline and will identify and name responsible organisations and focal persons. Formal commitments should be sought from the key stakeholders supporting district WASH.

A key output is the endorsement and commitment of applying the district-wide approach by the relevant district-level authorities and line-ministries. Development partners may become engaged at this stage. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) can be signed between key organisations.

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7 Based on government targets for WASH within a certain period. A shorter interim period (e.g. 5 years) can potentially be the initial phase of the implementation plan

3.3 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

Objective

To ensure that stakeholders spearheading the process (e.g. district-level authorities) are established and have the minimum capacity for subsequent steps. This includes structures and staff posts which can be further developed during the implementation phase.

Outputs

- Essential institutional structures established or strengthened, particularly at service authority level.
- Staffing gaps addressed; stakeholders familiar with their mandates and roles; focal persons identified for the district-wide approach[8]; country systems are in place at the district level.

Method and tools

Rapid assessment of the status and performance of the service authority, civil society and other relevant government entities in the district using a structured tool/checklist.

Ensuring provision of WASH services is a fundamental responsibility of government, which is why government bodies must play a leading role in Agenda for Change processes. This will be a challenge if the service authority and other relevant institutions lack basic capacity. During this step, institutions will be strengthened, so that during the whole process there is a clear and dedicated lead. As WASH often crosses several government functions (water, health, education etc.), the 'service authority' role may be covered by several institutions at district level, for example the district authority and devolved line ministry functions.

Rapid Institutional Assessment

An analysis of institutional structures and functions existing on the ground at district level is needed, to be able to compare with what is supposed to be in place according to national policy and institutional organograms. These are often not fully established or lack capacity. A structured and participatory rapid assessment using a checklist adapted to the national policy and institutional context will highlight critical institutional, staffing and capacity gaps to be addressed. Assessments vary but can include the following:

- The presence of key staffing posts (technical, planning and administrative related to WASH) – in the service authority/authorities, including staff or structures in the district authority and devolved line ministries at district level and any regional structures that support the district;
- The presence of key structures such as a district 'WASH Office', WASH coordination platform, key civil society platforms, monitoring and accountability platforms, WASH service provider associations, etc.;
- Operational functionality of these structures and their basic capacity to perform their mandated functions. Are they clear about their mandates and the functions they are expected to perform as per sector policy;
- The presence and usage of key documents at service authority level, such as a district WASH plan, district by-laws related to WASH, etc.;
- The extent that country systems, such as monitoring, administrative and reporting processes, are in place at country level , and whether stakeholders are aware of and adhere to national standards and norms, such as technology and construction standards, implementation guidelines etc.

Outputs can include scorecards highlighting key issues to be addressed, garner stakeholder commitment (e.g. to filling vacant posts), and to guide capacity support. Figure 3 shows an example of a mapping exercise from Honduras scoring capacity across three municipalities.

It is also important to understand priorities, capacities and factors in the wider sector and at district level that may support or impede efforts to make improvements.

Municipality	Institutions			Policy and planning functions		Monitoring	Technical assistance	Performance score
	COMAS	USCL	AJAM	WASH policy	WASH plan			
Municipality A	1	1	1	1	0	0.75	-	0.79
Municipality B	0.75	0.75	0.75	0	0	1	0.25	0.50
Municipality C	0.5	0.75	0.5	1	1	0.75	0	0.64

Figure 3: An example of the scoring from an institutional assessment checklist in Honduras.

8 The district-wide approach implies long-term commitment. It is important early in the process to obtain donor commitment for a sustained period to follow the process and support the district in the medium-term.

In the table on the previous page, a score of 1 indicates that the institution or function is working to the expected capacity. A score of zero means it is totally absent. Other scores indicate relative capacity between these extremes.

(Re)Establishing and Strengthening Institutions

Findings from the rapid assessment must be discussed with the district and any relevant provincial and national level counterparts. Commitment should be sought to address gaps and weaknesses by re-establishing and filling key functions/posts in accordance with national guidelines. This leads to the development of a phased capacity strengthening plan.

Short-term 'quick wins', particularly those required at the assessment and planning stages, should be undertaken as a priority. Medium-to-long term changes could be parked at this stage, to be included within the overall district WASH plan which is to follow at a later stage. Where appropriate, training should make use of the support functions of provincial and/or national level government.

Where Agenda for Change is being introduced in several districts simultaneously, capacity assessment and support may also be needed at provincial or national level. In Rwanda a consultant was seconded to the line-ministry secretariat to assist short term in national level coordination and in strengthening the national secretariat. Secondments may also be made to provide technical assistance to district-level authorities. Care is needed to ensure that support builds the ownership and capacity of authorities, rather than substituting for them.

The most important output from this stage would be that key stakeholders are in place at district level, understand their mandates and functions, and have some capacity to undertake them, even if this is limited at this stage. Focal persons have by now been nominated to undertake the subsequent assessment and planning phases.

3.4 ASSESSMENT PHASE

Phase Objective
To establish a rigorous evidence base for planning and a baseline against which implementation of the plan will be tracked.

Outputs
- An inventory of existing infrastructure assets, and a clear understanding of the capital investment and capital infrastructural works required to achieve universal access
- A clear initial understanding of the various life-cycle costs of existing and future services, to achieve universal access, and to ensure they last
- A comprehensive baseline of WASH service levels, service providers, stakeholder capacity, and water resources.

An adequate evidence base to inform decision making on issues such as technology options, service delivery models and behaviour change approaches.

To achieve universal access at district level requires a clear plan of how to establish and sustain coverage, based on a comprehensive and robust needs assessment. Information is required for the district level planning process on a range of aspects of service delivery, including service levels, infrastructure, water resources, and financial and institutional arrangements. Additional studies may be undertaken based on the stakeholders' understanding of district needs and issues, and the existing evidence base. A variety of tools is available.

The amount and complexity of information required may make the assessment appear daunting. It is important to show stakeholders the end product from other contexts, how information sources can be pooled and how data can be used, before engaging with the individual tools. Stakeholders should be able to see the destination, before embarking on the road to get there.

Examples of tools and surveys are included in this document, but wherever possible existing tools from the sector and country should be used to ensure that data is consistent with national monitoring frameworks[9], and can directly feed into national monitoring databases where they exist. If there are no agreed indicators for monitoring service levels or coverage, a process of harmonisation will be necessary with relevant institutions to ensure everyone is working to the same standards. Governmental and supporting agencies will probably require training to be

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9 Using sector definitions, benchmarks, key indicators, survey questions, standards etc.

able to conduct assessment surveys and use the tools. It is of key importance to use the assessment phase to ensure that permanent institutions at district level (and provincial/national levels where applicable) develop an ongoing capacity to collect, analyse and use data for future decision making.

Aggregation, analysis and validation of data collected during the assessment phase contribute to the first step in the planning phase.

The level of depth possible in the assessment phase will be dictated partly by contextual factors, partly by available finances, and partly by the extent of data already available, which may reduce the need for primary data collection. Datasets will continue to evolve during the planning and implementation phases.

3.4.1. COMMUNITY AND ASSET INVENTORY DEVELOPMENT

Objective
To establish an inventory of water supply and public sanitation infrastructure in the district, the status of individual major components, and communities that remain unserved, to assist in planning and costing of infrastructural works (capital and capital maintenance costs).

Method and Tools
- A technical field survey of existing water supply systems, using the asset register survey form (www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools).
- Field data will be incorporated into the asset register tool for subsequent analysis and decision making (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools).

Where a full asset assessment is not realistic or necessary, secondary data, such as existing water point mapping inventory data, can be used.

In many districts and countries, service authorities lack basic information on the number, types and functional status of water supply systems[10] in their area, seriously undermining their ability to plan and budget for capital maintenance and replacement works, which are necessary to keep services flowing over time. Without this data, the service authority support to service providers is reactive and ad-hoc, rather than planned and strategic.

A registry must be developed based on an inventory of all water supply systems in the district, using either structured surveys or checklists, or on existing water point inventory datasets. This will also assist in costing infrastructural investments.

A pragmatic, step-wise approach can be taken. The primary objective of developing an asset register is to derive a clear understanding of the investments needed to rehabilitate and construct water systems to achieve universal access and it will feed into the planning phase. Over time the asset register becomes a living tool which is kept updated, and used by the service authority(s) in planning, budgeting and ongoing management of WASH assets.

If resources allow, an engineering assessment should be also conducted of all systems in the district and fed into the asset registry analysis tool. If resources do not allow for a comprehensive survey, or where existing secondary data is adequate, it may be possible to use water point mapping data during the assessment and develop it further during the implementation phase.

The choice of approaches for developing the asset registry will be influenced by the nature of water systems in the district, and their heterogeneity. For example where water systems in the district are similar to each other (e.g. point sources with the same water lifting devices), it may be pragmatic to use the water point mapping data and/or sampling rather than a comprehensive survey. Where there is wide heterogeneity of water systems in the district, or piped water networks (which vary considerably per system) predominate, then a full engineering assessment may be needed. The following paragraph describes the process and tools for a full asset inventory in one community.

The assessment collects basic information on community size (as an indicator of demand), percentage of the community served and unserved, source yields, water quality, and GPS coordinates of infrastructure. It lists and assesses the type, age and current status of the various physical components of each facility, and identifies the frequency and common causes of breakdowns. Data can be entered manually into a database, or collected on a mobile-web system (such as mWater, Akvo Flow) and then extracted to a database or spreadsheet for analysis. Ideally all communities including those currently unserved, will be included in such a database, to help identify subsequent priorities.

It is essential that the assessment includes spatial data (e.g. GPS coordinates), so that maps can be generated of all systems in the district. The asset and community

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10 'Systems' in this context refers to the physical infrastructure for water supply, such as handpumps, piped water systems, rain water harvesting, protected springs, etc.

registry database forms not only the baseline on coverage, functionality and status of infrastructure; but is also a key tool for the district to keep track of new assets. Where countries already have inventory mapping and basic asset databases, the design of the survey and analysis tool should use these, or at least ensure coherence with them.

Once the dataset is consolidated, analysis can be performed (see Rwanda example). Examples of analysis spreadsheets are provided here. Analytical tools include the ability to input sector standards and norms, such as average life expectancy for specific system components, standards for water quantity, water quality, and number of users per water point. Depending on the level of detail and standards and norms input, tools automatically generate data on the number of facilities that are functional/non-functional, service levels provided, number of persons covered and unserved, and highlight not only facilities, but individual components within systems that are in need of repair or replacement. Asset analysis tools can rank risks to systems, and act as a guide to making priorities for capital and capital maintenance. The tool can identify current maintenance and replacement needs and predict what will be required in future years.

Figure 4: Example of GIS map of water points using Akvo Flow. Source: sustainableWASHalliance.org

17% 16%
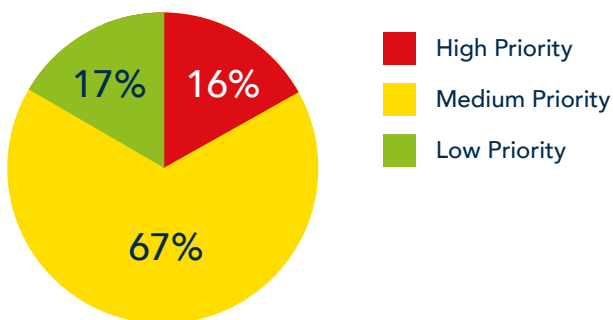67%

High Priority
Medium Priority
Low Priority

Figure 5: Example of graphs generated in the Asset Analysis Tool (Rwanda example)

Data collected at this stage will be used to determine investment costs for infrastructure, and will ideally be updated and evolved throughout the implementation process. This shows priority for repairs of existing assets.

3.4.2. UNDERSTANDING COSTS AND EXPENDITURES

Objective
To gain an understanding of and quantify the full life-cycle costs of providing and sustaining WASH services in the district and identify finances required to implement the plan.

Method and Tools
Interviews with and expenditure review of local authorities. Interviews with and financial review of service providers. Analysis of asset registers and average unit costs (potentially including engineering design costs) to understand infrastructure costs. Consolidation of data, analysis and stakeholder validation. Various tools are presented in the table on the next page.
The sector focus on achieving access has historically been on investment in construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure (capital investment), as a one-off exercise. However, sustained universal access will never be achieved without considering current and future recurrent costs such as operation and minor maintenance (O&M), repairs, replacements and expansion, and the costs of monitoring and supporting service providers. Districts find themselves on a never-ending conveyor belt where, as one new facility is constructed, another in the district becomes non-functional . Financing capital investments without addressing recurrent costs is equivalent to pouring funds into a leaking bucket. The life-cycle costs of a WASH service are summarised in the table on the next page, along with the various tools used by Agenda for Change to collect data on cost components.

For a WASH service to be sustainable, the costs of each component of the service life-cycle must be covered. Finance for this is typically from a combination of the so-called '3 Ts': **tariffs** and users investments payments, **taxes** (either from local government or via inter-governmental transfers), or **transfers** of aid (either in the form of direct grants, or concessionary loans). For household facilities such as domestic toilets and household water systems, household investments (with or without loans) provide another key source of funds.

Life-Cycle Cost Component	Cost Description (simplified)	Tool used in Agenda for Change
Capital expenditure (CapEx)	Initial investments in construction and one-off software activities	Costed Asset Register / (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools) / engineering survey/ Historical Investment Tool (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/tools-costing-everyone-forever-bolivia)
Capital Maintenance (CapManEx)	Expenditure on more major maintenance, repair or replacement which is not routine	Costed Asset Register / engineering survey / Historical Investment Tool
Operation and minor maintenance expenditure (OpEx)	Recurrent cost of operating the system, such as fuel, staff, chemicals, and regular maintenance costs – normally borne by the service providers (or households, in the case of domestic facilities)	At What Cost or Cash Flow Analysis tools - https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools
Expenditure on Direct Support (ExpDS)	The costs incurred by the service authority (e.g. district) in planning, coordinating, monitoring and providing mobilisation and technical support to service providers	District Capacity Assessment or Direct Support Cost Tools (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools)
Cost of Capital (CoC)	The cost of accessing finance for system construction – e.g. interest rates on loans, particularly looking at the public (rather than household) investments	Costing and Budgeting tool (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools)
Expenditure on Indirect Support (ExpIDS)	Generally national-level costs of the sector, such as policy, sector planning and coordination and capacity building costs	Not captured in the district-wide approach

As shown in the table, different tools are used to determine individual life-cycle components, and data is aggregated within one overall tool (such as the Costing and Budgeting Tool shown in the table). This provides an overview of current expenditure, and the expenditure required per year to achieve and sustain, universal access to WASH services in the district. Outputs go beyond a 'shopping list' of new investment needs for universal access, and clearly identify budget requirements for sustaining services indefinitely. It should be noted that the focus in this step is on services that are provided to communities, focusing mainly on water supply services and to a lesser extent sanitation services. When considering domestic sanitation or 'self-supply' private water supplies, direct investment by households should also be factored in.

As explained later in the planning phase section, it is important to understand how the costs of district schemes and services fit within the wider sector financing context.

Calculating Capital and Capital Maintenance Costs

The community and asset register (see above) identifies communities without existing water supply facilities (thus requiring capital investments), communities only partially served (requiring capital expenditure for service extension), and communities with systems that require major repair or rehabilitation works (requiring capital maintenance expenditure). There are various options to estimate costs for capital and capital maintenance expenditure:

- Undertaking an exhaustive engineering assessment and design for all the systems and communities in the district, to derive system / community-specific investment needs. This may be necessary where systems are mixed (such as piped schemes) and less so where facilities are mainly handpumps.
- Using historical and average unit costs in the sector to estimate capital and capital maintenance expenditure, based on information from the asset register. This could be the unit costs of various common components, average per capita costs, or other metrics found to be reliable for cost estimation[11].

Using an asset register that includes the design life of system components, makes it possible to project future capital maintenance costs (when components need to be replaced) as well as calculating initial capital and capital maintenance expenditure costs. This makes for greater accuracy in long-term expenditure projections in the financial plan. In some contexts, it may be relevant to include cost calculations for increasing levels of service, such as water supply on-premises and to meet the needs of growing populations. It should also be noted that the

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11 The basis for calculation will vary by technology and context. For example in Rwanda, unit costs per kilometre unit costs were more accurate than per capita averages for piped schemes

unit cost for providing services will almost certainly increase as coverage increases. Achieving universal access means reaching every last household and community, some of which may be more remote and more expensive per capita.

Calculating Operation and Minor Maintenance Costs

To help in calculating adequate tariff levels in communities, meetings should be held with service providers and community members to understand the costs of running the service now and over time, and how these costs are currently and will be covered by tariffs and other revenue sources. Countries guidelines or protocols for determining tariffs should be used where applicable. Otherwise the cash flow analysis tool (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools) can be used for data entry and analysis. Information should be collected about community water demand, together with data on infrastructure cost components (with age and design life), operating and minor maintenance expenditures, and revenues. The data can help to project system demands and costs. Expected revenue and expenditures can be compared over a specific period (10-15 years) making a cash flow analysis and projection.

Clarity is needed about who is responsible to cover various life-cycle costs, e.g. users through tariffs and service authorities commonly through transfers. There is often uncertainty about who should cover major maintenance, and about the border line between the costs of operation and minor maintenance and those of capital maintenance. Obtaining better data on cash flow projections will stimulate discussions about the adequacy of current revenues, and the need to modify tariffs if necessary. Where tariffs are prescribed through regulation or based on sector tariff guidelines, the discussion will focus on how to bridge any funding gaps.

A review of O&M costs and user financing can be undertaken on a small sample of systems[12], to derive figures that can be deemed representative for similar service delivery models. These figures feed into the consolidated financing analysis, described below.

The data collected in this initial analysis should be progressively updated during the implementation period, as further experience and better cost information becomes available.

Calculating Direct Support Costs

WASH services, and those who provide them (WASH management committees, municipal or private operators, etc.) require support, monitoring and regulation by mandated organisations, such as district authorities. Authorities incur costs in undertaking these activities, and in undertaking coordination, planning and management of WASH services at district level. We refer to these as direct support costs. They include the costs of community mobilisation and outreach to stimulate demand and ensure household investments, including, for example, community-led total sanitation (CTLS) and support for self-supply type processes. Direct support costs are commonly financed through central government transfers and/or local taxes, but finances are often inadequate and this limits the capacity of authorities to carry out their functions.

District support costs need to be calculated and compared with current expenditure and what will be required over time. A clear understanding is required of the service authority mandate and sector level standards or benchmarks. The per-capita cost of providing support to communities may rise as coverage rises, as authorities engage with more remote areas and those that need extra mobilisation efforts.

The Direct Support Costs Tool is used to calculate costs following discussion and an expenditure review with the local authority.

Consolidating the Financial Data

Financial data streams of the various life-cycle cost components need to be consolidated and cross analysed. This process and the tools that can be used to do this are presented in Section 3.5

3.4.3. ASSESSING SERVICE LEVELS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Objective

To establish a clear understanding of the current situation regarding access to WASH services; the level of service being provided; hygiene knowledge and behaviours, and capacity of service providers, to inform subsequent interventions and establish a baseline for tracking progress.

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12 The sample size does not need to be statistically significant, but should aim to capture the diversity of technology options (and pumping/fuel types if applicable) and management models that occur in the district, in addition to other potential influencing factors (e.g. size of system, major differences in willingness/ability to pay, etc.)

Method and Tools

- Field surveys by enumerators, including household surveys, institutional WASH surveys, service provider surveys, potentially using mobile-web software.

Where it exists, national survey data can be used. A district-wide plan must have a baseline against which implementation is monitored and be based on a clear mapping of needs. This step complements the asset registry by assessing the level of services being provided to households and institutions, as well as the performance of the service provider.

Depending on the resources available for the assessment phase, and the comprehensiveness of existing sector survey data available, this step would either follow primary data collection through surveys, use existing data, or use a combination of both.

Existing data may include Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) or Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) datasets, previous WASH surveys in the district, etc. Primary data can be collected as described below.

Most countries where Agenda for Change work have national monitoring systems and benchmarks to measure service levels and service provider performance, even if they do not cover all indicators and are not fully operational. Every effort should be taken to use and build on such monitoring systems so that data collected feeds country systems. It may also be appropriate to consider involving the national statistics bureau (or equivalent) in the survey. As with the asset register, surveys can use mobile web applications to collect and share data and use software for analysis and presentation. Surveys include:

- **Household survey:** Statistically representative surveys ascertain WASH service levels that households currently access. They can potentially gather information on community members' knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding sanitation and hygiene and water consumption and even information on willingness and ability to pay for WASH services. Household surveys may be complemented with aspects such as water quality sampling at facility level, transect walks or sanitary surveys, to capture amongst other things, information on equity in access.
- **WASH in Institutions survey:** A sample or exhaustive survey of the WASH status of public institutions, such as schools and clinics, and potentially also of knowledge and practices of staff and students.
- **Service provider performance survey:** Assessing the capacity of service providers such as WASH committees and private operators, and the support they receive from service authorities, and the capacity of supply

chain actors, artisans, entrepreneurs, natural leaders, maintenance services, health extension workers, etc. throws a light on the challenges and opportunities within a district, and informs the design of capacity strengthening activities.

3.4.4. WATER RESOURCES ASSESMENT

Objective

To establish a clear understanding of water resources in the district (available resources, water quality, demand and multiple uses) to allow evidence based planning and implementation, and potentially to establish a baseline for subsequent monitoring .

Method and Tools

- Depending on context, this requires a desk-based review, or specific measurements, surveys, and community consultations. Tools include the Multiple Use Water Services Toolkit (https://www.musgroup.net/node/15, https://www.ircwash.org/sites/default/files/Adank-2012-Guidelines.pdf), FAO Water Resources Assessment Toolkit (http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/nr/kagera/Documents/LADA_manuals/part2_f.pdf).

Planning and decision making for water supply services needs to take account of the amount and quality of water available, current demand, likely future demand, threats to water availability and quality and trends. The level of detail and scope of the assessment depends mainly on the extent to which water resources are, or will become, a limiting factor on sustainable and universal WASH services. Without a good understanding of water availability and quality over time, service sustainability and service levels may be severely impacted.

At a minimum, this step includes a desk review of the water resources situation in the district, focusing on water quality, water quantity and reliability/seasonality. This can be done by reviewing drilling logs, hydrogeological maps, drilling success rates, data on spring yields, borehole yields, static water levels and changes over time, pumping water levels, water quality data, data on seasonality of systems, major water demands (other than for drinking) and land-use, as well as available data on climate change projections and potential threats to water resources.

At field-level, some elements can be integrated, for example: volumetric demand for water can be part of the household survey; community consultations regarding (multiple) water use can be done during service provider assessment visits; and water quality and water level and yield testing can be done during the infrastructure asset survey.

3.4.5. OTHER POTENTIAL STUDIES DURING THE ASSESMENT PHASE

There may be a need to undertake extra studies and assessments to inform decision making and budgeting and to design activities. The table below provides some examples, but is by no means exhaustive. Some studies and associated pilots can be included as activities within the final plan, and therefore undertaken during the implementation phase. These further avenues of

investigation will depend on the specific challenges and opportunities of the sector and district contexts, and on whether issues identified during the assessment phase require further investigation.

3.5 PLANNING PHASE

Phase Objective
Based on the analysis of collected information, to develop a district-wide strategic and financial plan for achieving and sustaining universal access to WASH services and improving hygiene behaviours.

Outputs
- An evidence based, phased and costed district-wide plan, including: targets and milestones, activities, a monitoring and accountability framework, a budget

Dimension	Objective	Method and Tools
Technologies	To factor in technology choices based on which are most appropriate and sustainable for the context	Undertaking primary studies, such as applying the WASHTech Technology Assessment Framework (https://www.ircwash.org/resources/review-frameworks-technology-assessment), and/or reviewing secondary data (e.g. sector and programme reviews, national technology standards and guidelines)
Service delivery models and behaviour change approaches	To understand the most appropriate and effective approach or model for managing water and sanitation services / behaviour change activities etc. in the different contexts within the district, to inform the subsequent planning and activity design	This may include commissioning studies, or using existing studies and data in the sector. Also to check sector norms and guidelines for this.
Waste flows and management arrangements	To understand and quantify flows, volumes and financial aspects of solid and liquid waste to inform budgeting and service planning	This may include data collection from local authorities, service providers and households (the latter possibly through the household surveys), inputting data into tools such as the Faecal waste flow calculator (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/faecal-waste-flow-calculator)
Equity, participation and gender analysis	To understand and help to tackle barriers that stand in the way of people accessing services at the local level	This may include gender barrier analysis or assessments of accessibility and safety of WASH services as well as levels of participation. WaterAid's Equity, Non-discrimination and Inclusion (ENDI) toolkit pulls together tools from a number of sources to help do this (http://www.wateraid.org/policy-practice-and-advocacy/equality-and-non-discrimination/resources).

projection, and a resource mobilisation strategy

- The plan is owned, adopted and launched by the district, with consensus and commitment to its implementation from national and local government, and supporting organisations.

Method and tools

- The overall process for analysis and planning should be participatory and inclusive, potentially including workshops, working groups and consultation meetings. Government processes are likely to guide overall process of planning and the template for the plan itself.
- The district authority should drive the development of a comprehensive WASH plan which will mobilise resources, and align and harmonise their efforts with those of other organisations operating in the district, including centrally-funded programmes and those conducted by NGOs. Such a plan should be developed in a consultative and non-partisan manner. In some contexts the 'WASH plan' will not stand alone, but be a section within a wider district development plan. Planning should take account of sector and (national) governmental targets, existing strategic sector plans, and be based on a broader understanding of processes, templates and cycles of local government planning and budgeting.
- The WASH plan provides the basis for assessing sector progress in the district and will be used by civil society to hold the service authority to account.
- This roadmap presents generic steps for the planning process.; Sector and government processes for planning and budgeting should be followed wherever possible.

Consolidation, Analysis and Validation of the Assessment Phase Findings

The Assessment Phase generates volumes of data and information which need to be analysed and used for decision making and planning. The process of analysis and interpretation provides an opportunity to empower and build capacity within district (and possibly national) authorities, and should not therefore be undertaken primarily by consultants or supporting organisations, although training and technical assistance may be offered to district stakeholders.

Data needs to be discussed and validated, potentially requiring a review workshop at the end of the assessment phase or the beginning of the planning phase.

Consolidation of the financial data sources: Figure 6 shows how the various financial data streams are consolidated to produce an overall financing summary for

the district. Through using tools such as the **Sustainable Financing Scorecard** or Financial Overview function of the **Costing and Budgeting tool**, the various life-cycle cost components can be entered, allowing a projection to be made of finances required over time to achieve access for everyone, forever. Adding information on current expenditure will ascertain the current financing gap. The outputs of this will be critical for the financial planning step within the planning phase.
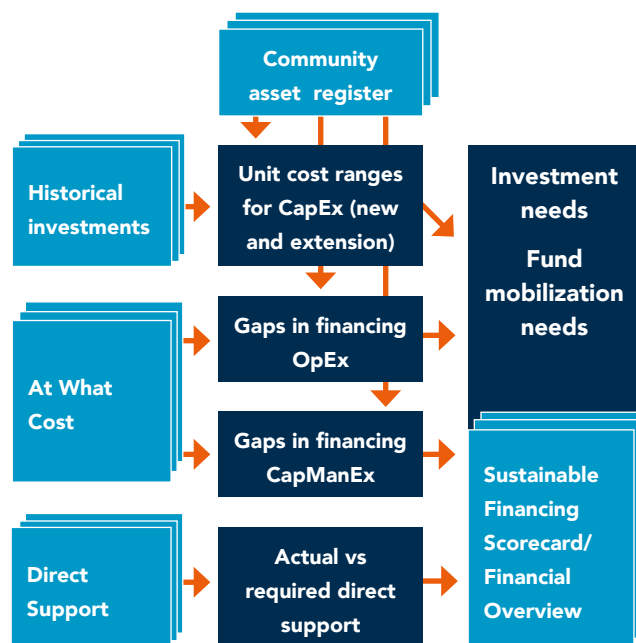

Figure 6: Consolidating the financial data sources

Key Components of the Plan:

- **Vision, Targets and Milestones**
  Once the findings of the assessment phase have been presented and validated, district stakeholders need to agree on the overall vision for the district WASH plan, and this has to be endorsed and publically adopted by the district authority. Stakeholders may focus on the part of the plan to reach everyone. A strong emphasis also needs to be placed on sustainability "reaching everyone forever", so this does not become an investment plan focused only on capital and capital maintenance investments. Targets and milestones need to be agreed, and aligned with existing national policy, strategy and targets, international commitments (e.g. SDGs), and the wider development strategy/plan of the district. Such a district plan will be time-bound, and potentially phased[13], with periodic review and updating after fixed periods. Targets and/or timeframes set out in the initial visioning stage (section 3.2) need to be adjusted based

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13 For example a plan could cover up to 2030, but be broken into 5-year phases. One example of phasing in terms of activities and targets may be an initial phase focusing on achieving universal access to basic level of service, and then service upgrading to 'safely managed' in line with the SDG targets.

on the findings from the assessment phase, and what is realistically achievable.

- **Strategies, Activities and Approaches**
Based on findings in the Assessment Phase, activities will be developed to address various needs. These will probably include infrastructural works (capital and capital maintenance works), institutional strengthening at district and service provider level, community engagement and behaviour change communication initiatives, and coordination and monitoring activities. Engagement with national sector stakeholders may be necessary to clarify certain aspects of policy and financing. The most appropriate programmatic approaches (e.g. mode of sanitation promotion etc.), service delivery models and technology options need to be selected, again ensuring coherence with sector policy.

Planning must take account of different levels of demand and expectation within the district. Deprived communities want a service; those with an existing service probably want improvements. Some communities are willing to pay more for a higher level of service, while others may be more concerned about keeping user fees low. There will be different demands and expectations for multiple uses. A district will need to consider different service delivery models for different areas and levels of demand. For example, demand for piped systems that can provide water to the household grows with rising incomes and increasing urbanisation. The plan needs to acknowledge and address the changing needs of these different user markets.

- **Budgeting and Resourcing**
Detailed costing of activities combined with the financing overview/sustainable financing scorecard (see Section 3.3.2), will identify what resources are required to reach everyone forever, both in terms of initial capital and recurrent costs. Setting this against current revenues will show that gaps that need to be filled through one or more of the 'Three Ts'. Some countries have found it useful to map existing and historical financing flows into and within the given district, an example of which is shown in Figure 7. For domestic level facilities, such as toilets and household self-supply water sources, direct household investment also needs to be factored in. A resource mobilisation strategy needs to be developed and decisions taken regarding how gaps will be addressed. Any consideration of increases in taxes or tariffs needs to be based on an understanding of the willingness and ability to pay of residents and users, and potentially include pro-poor arrangements. Proposed changes to tariff levels should be aligned with guidelines or frameworks set by government or independent regulators. Lobbying can be done with

central government, supporting agencies (e.g. NGOs) and development partners to increase transfers, and loans may also need to be considered. A detailed budget, projected year by year and aligned to activities in the plan, will assist in marketing the plan to potential financiers who can choose to fund specific activities or cost components, and will also facilitate subsequent implementation reporting.

- **Implementation Arrangements**
Arrangements for implementation need to be detailed in the plan, including procurement arrangements, financial flows and reporting, and roles and responsibilities of the organisations and departments involved. It may be that implementation and financing arrangements remain flexible within the overall plan framework, allowing implementation and financing through a combination of conduits, such as NGOs and government, providing they work to the common plan and reporting framework.

- **Monitoring Framework**
A monitoring framework needs to be developed as part of the plan, harmonised with existing sector monitoring frameworks and indicators. This should focus not only on outputs (e.g. access) but also on outcomes, such as service provider performance, service levels achieved, and any overall indicators for sustainability. Tracking should update datasets from the baseline created during the assessment phase. Mechanisms for collecting monitoring data need to be included and costed. Tools include periodic surveys, implementation monitoring and supervision, service provider key-performance indicator reporting, periodic participatory stakeholder reviews, etc.
Always research and utilise existing government-led monitoring frameworks; so that any data generated can at the least align with these systems and inform them.

Accountability and Consultation

Local level planning does not necessarily guarantee equitable planning or that consumers and other stakeholders have the means to articulate their views. Efforts will be needed to ensure plans respond to actual needs rather than political rhetoric, are non-partisan and inclusive, and monitoring is needed to ensure that they are implemented. Building on evidence derived from the assessment phase, the draft plan should be publically presented, and all relevant stakeholders consulted. Existing frameworks for local government planning should be followed. The development of the WASH plan can showcase best practice in a robust and inclusive planning process.
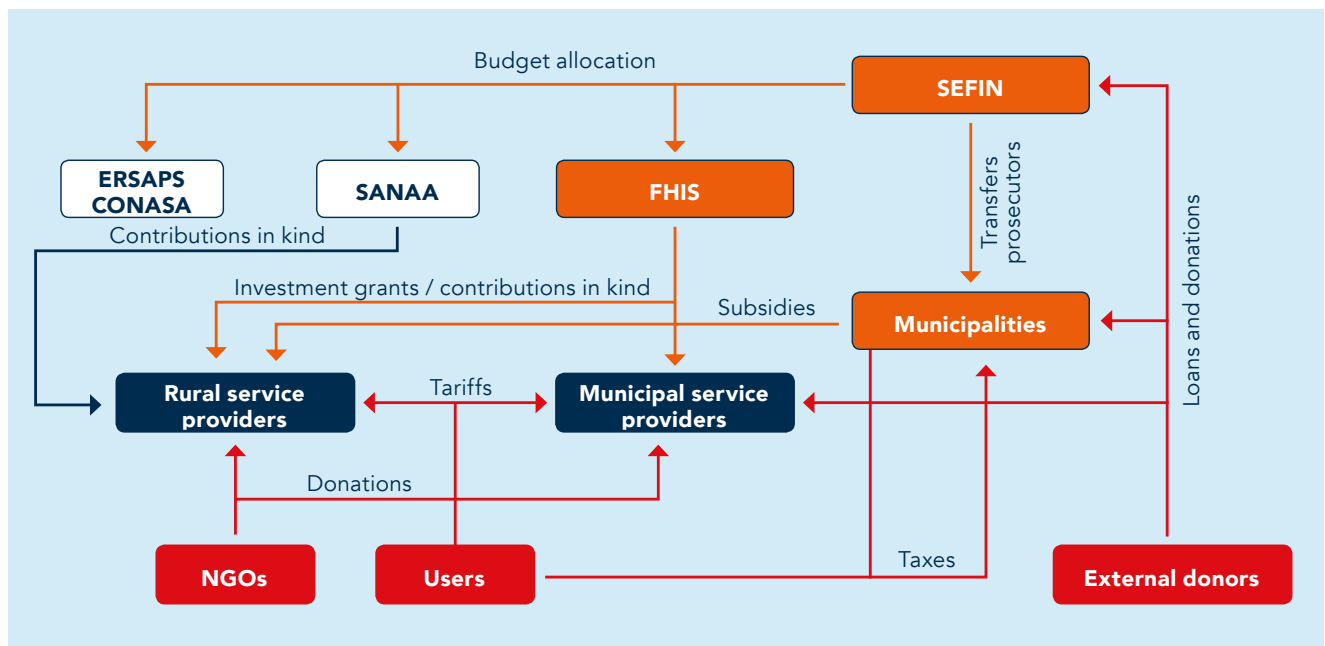
Figure 7: Example of financial flow diagram from Honduras

Source: Public Expenditure Review: Decentralization of Water and Sanitation Services. World Bank, 2014

Plan Adoption and Dissemination

A plan is only as useful as the extent to which it is actually used; a plan will not lead to change if it sits on the shelf and gathers dust.

Sector specific plans developed at district level must be integrated within wider district development planning and budgeting. Broad buy-in from local government staff other than the WASH unit, and other district stakeholders, is key to the successful uptake and application of the plan. It is worth investing in time and resources to disseminate the plan and get such buy-in. It is beneficial to involve not only WASH technical staff but also the wider planning and administrative district authority staff to mitigate the risk that the plan will become isolated and neglected. Ideally the plan should be formally and publically adopted by the district authorities. It may indeed become a chapter of a wider district development plan. Either way, the plan should be disseminated (and marketed) widely within the district, and at provincial and national level, and ideally be made publically available online. Given that sector planning may be undertaken at different levels (e.g. provincial or national), it is important that the relevant government entities at those levels are aware of the plan, so that it can be factored into broader sector plans and proposals.

3.6 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING (WITH ACCOUNTABILITY)

Phase Objective

Plan targets are achieved in a quality, coordinated and accountable manner, and are periodically reviewed

Outputs

• Sustained and universal access to WASH services within the district, as documented in progress and review reports

Resourcing the Plan, Coordination and Alignment

Once an overarching, harmonised plan is developed it should be made widely known and marketed to partners and potential funding sources, to garner commitment to finance, and to ensure agreement to align activities. Commitment to adhering to the plan can be formalised through formal agreements such as Memorandums of Understanding. Such agreements can bind organisations to basic operating procedures, such as common reporting protocols and participation in coordination meetings. Efforts need to continue at district and possibly provincial and national level, to ensure coordination of the various organisational efforts and that all partners align to and report against the same plan.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building for Implementation

Training, mentoring and technical assistance will be required to ensure that district authorities and other implementing organisations have the capacity to implement, manage and monitor activities, including for example adherence to sector standards. Support may come from funders, NGOs or provincial and national government entities. Where technical assistance is provided, efforts should be made to ensure this builds the ownership, leadership and long-term capacity of the district authorities. Continue to build links between the district authorities and regional/national support structures and to strengthen the capacity of such support structures.

Monitoring, Review and Accountability

Monitoring should track progress to targets; track service levels, WASH practices of residents and sustainability; track quality of implementation of software and hardware activities; track fund allocation/ expenditure; monitor water source yield/quality, etc. These activities are detailed in the plan itself. Data collected should feed into wider sector monitoring systems and lead to corrective action where the data shows gaps or weaknesses.

Regular coordination meetings should be held at district and potentially sub-district level. In addition, joint monitoring visits and stakeholder reviews should be conducted to support coordination and learning between stakeholders involved in financing, support and delivery and boost mutual accountability. The monitoring and review process should feed into Joint Sector Reviews being conducted in the country.

External evaluations, third party monitoring (e.g. sustainability checks) and programme audits help to strengthen implementation accountability, and ensure that reports are made available publicly. Other means to strengthen accountability include formal grievance processes and mechanisms for service user and feedback through Citizen Scorecards, SMS systems, etc.

Data sets collected in the assessment phase should be updated and used for decision making. The Asset Register should be kept updated, and used as a key tool for ongoing monitoring, management and planning for maintenance and replacement initiatives.

Learning and Dissemination

The district-wide approach is likely to be new in many contexts, and may be used to pilot new approaches, with the aim of scaling up those which are proven to be effective and impactful. Through periodic reviews and evaluations, efforts should be made to document lessons learned throughout the roadmap phases. Periodic reflection and learning, through coordination or learning groups, helps to strengthen the district-wide approach, and enables best practice to be scaled up, stimulating upscaling to other districts and even internationally. The process of change must be documented.

4. LINKING THIS ROADMAP TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Whilst the focus of this approach is at district level, systematic change toward universal WASH services also requires harmony with national systems.

Agenda for Change partners work by supporting the application of well-developed existing WASH systems, changing and strengthening WASH systems that are weak, and by helping to build the WASH systems where they do not exist. Implementing Agenda for Change principles will strengthen national (sector) level systems at district level and identify any gaps or shortfalls. The core building blocks for WASH need to be developed at both levels and an assessment of the key components in the district and nationally will inform the strategy and selection of priorities for system strengthening initiatives.

Some important building blocks such as regulation may be well developed at national level but weakly applied in the district, while monitoring may be effective at district level but have limited development and support at national level.

Implementing the roadmap requires district actors to understand and apply national policies. Where the national level is weak, tools and ideas in this roadmap can be used to experiment and learn within the district, to generate evidence that is used for advocacy at the national level and support changes or improvements to country systems. Ultimately the district-wide approach aims to scale up through learning and experimenting in a single district and spreading practices and lessons in other districts and nationally. Local success can have national impact.

5. CONCLUSION

Agenda for Change is about strengthening WASH systems and demonstrating how this can lead to achieving universal and sustained access to WASH services. Applying Agenda for Change at the district level emphasises an integrated and harmonised approach to building on and strengthening existing governmental systems, supporting government leadership, and providing concrete examples of how national objectives for the WASH sector can be accelerated and achieved sustainably. The approach is based on the collection of robust data, achieving a common understanding of challenges and opportunities, and a systematic approach to making, financing and implementing a plan. It involves a commitment by partners to work to the plan and monitoring to ensure that progress is being made. We believe that the district-wide approach, with the district as a unit of focus, provides a more holistic and integrated route to sector strengthening and requires a long-term vision and a commitment to doing things properly and sustainably.